

### Yvonne Galligan – Manon Tremblay (eds.): Sharing Power: Women, Parliament and Democracy

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rally and conceptually. The 'passive leverage' of the EU operated largely on its own between 1989 and 1994, as the EU itself struggled to come to terms with the transformations of its CEE 'hinterland' and was divided over policy and strategy regarding the new ex-communist states. 'Active leverage', on the other hand, came to the fore alongside 'passive leverage' after 1994, as the EU began to actively intervene in CEE political reconstruction through the promise of prospective EU membership subject to satisfying certain conditions of membership. Through this conditionality the EU exerted active leverage over domestic political reconstruction within EU candidate states in CEE, as it specified detailed requirements for the political reconstruction process, and regularly monitored and supervised compliance and/or the process of reform in candidate states.

Vachudova's work is a detailed study of the role of the EU, through the process of 'leverage', in channelling the political reconstruction in six CEE states. The work dedicates two chapters to the concept of passive leverage and how it operated during the 1989–1994 period and three chapters to the later period of active leverage, and focuses on EU interventions in enhancing political competition and promoting neo-liberal economic reform. As a work forged within the mainstream International Relations' (IR) paradigms of inter-state relations and sub-state political interactions, combining realism and rational-choice theory in unqualified forms, it may leave many sociologists disappointed. Its unapologetic Schumpeterian notion of democracy as little more than a mechanism for the periodic changing of the state executive through an élite competition for votes in the political marketplace may also leave many political scientists dissatisfied. And its implicit 'end of history' perspective, where liberal democracy represents the secret *telos* of 'transition', hence the problem of the 'deviants', may leave many others unimpressed. Yet, *Europe Undivided* is an empirically rich and detailed work, and exceptionally methodologically conscientious within the confines

of IR frameworks. Though the framing of its question may be less than ideal, the work nevertheless contains much of interest to sociologists, not least its rigorous elaboration and operationalisation of the concept of 'leverage', and its documentation of the EU's role in CEE political reconstruction in such terms. At the very least, it provides a challenge to social constructivists and sociological institutionalists to provide an equally comprehensive and detailed account of the EU's role in 'transition' that is not marred by the excessive reductionism and crude rationalism of IR exponents. And as such, it must be welcomed.

Sara Clavero

**Yvonne Galligan – Manon Tremblay (eds.):**  
*Sharing Power: Women, Parliament and Democracy*

Burlington, VT 2005: Ashgate Publishing Company, 240 pp.

In *Sharing Power: Women, Parliament and Democracy*, editors Yvonne Galligan and Manon Tremblay apply a common framework to twenty national case studies of women in parliament. Each case study addresses the historical elements of women's political rights, the roles of political parties and the electoral system, obstacles to the full representation of women in parliament, and strategies for increasing the number of women parliamentarians. In this way they attempt to create a standard for comparison between several nations with various political and structural histories; for example, for comparing women's parliamentary representation in emerging democracies in Latin America to an established democracy like the United Kingdom. Most applicable to the Central and Eastern European context are the case studies of post-communist countries like Hungary and Croatia. Despite its breadth, this collection is surprisingly far from formulaic; the authors illustrate these topics in common through historical analysis, empirical data, and qualita-

tive sociological data. This review briefly assesses each case study in the order presented in the anthology.

The introduction outlines several principles of women's parliamentary participation common to several nations that guide this research. The right-wing/left-wing debate, though it is not always explicitly stated, argues that liberal parties are more sensitive to the need to promote female Members of Parliament (MPs). Socio-cultural factors, derived from political history or religious dogma, also hinder women's access to politics. EU member states must balance traditional practices with EU priorities aimed at the equal representation of women in parliament. Some nations incorporate the notion of *parity* into their system, i.e. guaranteeing equal numbers of women and men access to elected office. Others use a system of proportional representation, where the proportion of members elected reflects the proportion of votes gained for that party, and thus the political groups that exist in society are proportionally represented in elected bodies. Ideally, this system should increase the number of women holding parliamentary seats.

Sharon Bessell opens *Sharing Power* with a description of the socio-cultural expectations for shaping the landscape of women's parliamentary participation in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Strong notions of paternalism and ideals of womanhood, rooted in an Islamic culture, circumscribe women's roles to 'wife, household manager, child bearer, educator' and lastly, 'citizen' (p. 13). That the country formerly had a female president has sent a strong signal that women have a place in politics, but the number of women in parliament is still a paltry 11%.

Hungary represents another example where women are losing out in the political scene during the transition to democracy. Here also women's roles as mothers and caretakers are cited as a barrier to political representation, as is the communist patriarchal legacy and the public bias against affirmative action policies. Yet even as a relatively new

democracy Hungary has managed to establish both legal and institutional structures for advancing women's rights, such as a strong anti-discrimination law and government agencies specializing in gender issues. The author of the chapter on Hungary, Elisabeth Kardos-Kaponyi, raises concerns, however, about the unfulfilled promises of greater gender equality and the role of the European Union in influencing the Hungarian gender agenda. The socialist and liberal political parties have adopted the EU theme of equal opportunity by encouraging women candidates and promoting 'women's' policy issues.

According to Alisa del Re, the Italian political agenda scarcely addresses gender concerns at all. Her argument that historical gender prejudices have barred women from political participation is supported by data; since the mid-1990s, women's parliamentary representation has remained around 11%. The Italian debate centres on the principles of egalitarianism (abolishing all gender differences) and difference (recognising the unique situation of women's oppression).

France, another EU state, has a majority voting system, and political parties are unwilling to apply the principle of parity to their party candidate lists. Mariette Sineau's empirical and historical analysis of the quantity and impact of female MPs reveals how their numerical weakness limits their impact in parliament. Even with these barriers, the radical notion of parity exists in French law. Sineau hopes French women will take advantage of the 'opportunity offered by the building of Europe' and enter politics at the supranational level, and that they will fight to close the loopholes in the parity law, which make it possible to exclude women from lower-level political offices (p. 60).

In addition to socialisation-related obstacles and the division of labour between the sexes, Yvonne Galligan notes that Irish women are also confronted with the traditional Roman Catholic dictums about a woman's place in society. Financial and family networks, educational background and

'availability', that is, the perception that if elected a woman prioritises political responsibilities over family concerns, also factor into the equation. Those women who do make it to elected office must balance responsibilities to their constituencies and to their job as a legislator.

Mi Yung Yoon's analysis of sub-Saharan Africa highlights barriers in common across forty-three nations: unequal access to education, financial difficulties, patriarchal culture, the socialisation of gender roles, household responsibilities, and an electoral system that negatively affects women's legislative representation. Yoon further analyses four nations – Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda – where women occupy more than 20% of the seats in parliament. In these nations, female legislators and NGOs put gender issues on the agenda, though in some cases a lack of education and experience results in the disenfranchising of women MPs.

Stephanie Rousseau examines in Peru the unusual coincidence of the decision of women to enter institutional politics with the rise of Alberto Fujimori's part-democratic, part-authoritarian regime in the 1990s. Corruption aside, Fujimori's administration campaigned for women's rights through supportive legislation; the small number of female MPs elected were able to effectuate changes beneficial to women. Peru is an unusual case because parties hold little power, there is a 30% quota and 'double preferential voting' in favour of women, and traditional culture does *not* bar women from access to politics; nevertheless, women have still not achieved equality with men in the level of parliamentary representation.

The United Kingdom is home to one of the world's best politicians, Margaret Thatcher, but despite her success political parties and electoral systems make entry into politics difficult for women. In the chapter on the UK, Fiona Mackay suggests possible constitutional changes and presents Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland for examples of methods of networking and mobilising fe-

male academics and politicians and women's NGOs. While most female MPs focus on policy change in 'traditional "feminine" areas such as education, social welfare, and health' (p. 118), the simple presence of women MPs in Scotland encourages male MPs to also advocate for these 'feminine' issues.

Croatia, a post-communist, European nation with a recent war behind it, emphasises developing a public role for women while simultaneously decreasing their role in the private sphere. Smiljana Leinert Novosel highlights the historical role of NGOs in fighting patriarchal structures and their current role in counterbalancing the often gender-insensitive views of party politicians. Women's interest in politics is on the rise, and though quotas are not mandated, their informal use within parties points to the strengthening presence of women in politics.

The under-representation of women in Canada's House of Commons is explained in terms of incumbency and gender-based socialisation, neither of which has been addressed by either the federal government or the feminist movement. Manon Tremblay suggests introducing financial incentives for parties in order to promote the advancement of women politicians and also proposes changing the system to one of proportional representation.

In her study of Switzerland, Thanh-Huyen Ballmer-Cao mentions the matter of Swiss conservatism (women's suffrage was only granted in 1971), and she argues that the country has been playing 'catch-up' since then. The women's movement, strong regional governments, direct democracy and the electoral system have a positive influence on female political representation. Surprisingly, the debates on gender quotas (which were ultimately rejected) pointed out the disparities between women and men; in the past proportional representation in Switzerland had addressed only issues of 'region, partisan tendency or language' (p. 170).

There are several differences between the situation of women in Australia and in New

Zealand, such as the electoral system (quotas in Australia and proportional representation in New Zealand) and women's agency (via NGOs in Australia and from within New Zealand's Labour Party). New Zealand historically boasts more women MPs than Australia, though in both nations women face similar barriers owing to cultural expectations, the 'closed gates' of political parties, and neoliberal attitudes. Sandra Grey and Marian Sawyer the authors of the chapters on these countries, present New Zealand's Prime Minister, Helen Clark, as an example of a woman parliamentarian who has pushed for community services and social security policy changes.

Celia Valiente, Luis Ramiro and Laura Morales explore the theories behind the political under-representation of Spanish women using an empirical test of demand-side and supply-side arguments. They find that women are gaining access to parliament, have similar educational and social characteristics to male MPs, and have even improved their position within power structures, but that they are nonetheless 'still far from sharing power with men on an equal basis' (p. 201). The low demand for female parliamentarians seems to be a function of the parliamentary culture and party selection practices.

Scandinavia has long been hailed as the most politically gender-friendly region, with its multi-party, proportional representation and preferential voting systems. But Jill M. Bystydzienski draws attention to the sex-role debates of the 1950s and 1960s that highlighted the 'striking disparity [that] existed between the formal quality of the sexes and the everyday reality faced by women' (p. 210). Focusing primarily on Norway, which lagged behind the other Nordic nations in gender equality issues, Bystydzienski argues that simply increasing the numbers of women in parliament has not increased the amount of influence that women MPs wield in changing policy. Parliamentary structures and power relationships must change so that women's needs are meaningfully addressed.

The final case, by Monique Leyenaar, tracks the movement of women in politics from tokens to players in the Netherlands. Parties and the government, by providing political and financial support, have empowered women MPs. Unlike their counterparts from the 1990s, modern female MPs do not fit the labels of feminist, mother, or housewife. Leyenaar worries that the supply of women willing to become parliamentarians may decrease owing to the increased demands of career, family, and community, and to a conservative shift in Dutch politics.

This book is an excellent primer on worldwide women's parliamentary representation. Within the constraints of the common framework, the authors of this anthology convey a surprising amount of analysis. However, each account leaves the reader with more specific questions. How will post-communist and post-authoritarian nations shake – or learn from – their political past? What concrete methods of overcoming socio-cultural biases are transferable across nations? What avenues of further research are necessary?

There is noteworthy acknowledgement of the work of non-governmental organisations; almost all the case studies describe grassroots efforts to mobilise, train, and educate women in parliamentary skills. Most cases also assess the form and impact of women's movements, particularly in relation to suffrage rights, on the current situation of power sharing in parliaments.

One minor criticism is that this collection lacks a representative non-European perspective. Indonesia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Peru, Canada, and Australia and New Zealand represent five out of the fifteen case studies; in two of these examples, multiple nations are combined. In addition, organising the chapters thematically (instead by the level of women's representation in parliament) would help readers to grasp the similarities and differences in women's struggles to share power across the globe.

*Veena Srinivasa*